



Congresswoman **Lois Capps**

REPORTS TO YOU

Strengthening Homeland Security

Nearly a year has passed since the September 11 terrorist attacks. The highest priority of the American people – and Congress – is preventing another catastrophic attack.

We must never forget that thousands of American servicemen and women are risking their lives every day defending our nation. I stand squarely behind our troops, and have consistently voted for bipartisan defense bills to ensure our armed services remain the most prepared, best equipped, and best trained in the world.

Our nation's transportation systems and points of entry must be made more secure. Congress enacted a law to make airport security a federal responsibility, authorize more air marshals, and improve cabin and cockpit security measures. I also voted to improve border security by hiring more officers, modernizing INS databases, and creating tamper-proof visas. And I voted to strengthen the anti-terrorism efforts of the Coast Guard and improve security at our ports.

I was pleased to help pass a major bill to prepare our nation for bioterrorism. This measure will help fund the efforts of Central Coast law enforcement, health care and first responder agencies, which must all work together in the face of a bioterrorist event. This bill also increases our nation's stockpile of vaccines, imposes new controls on deadly toxins, and protects food and drinking water supplies.

Finally, as we learn more about the intelligence and communication failures that preceded September 11, it is imperative that we streamline and coordinate the anti-terrorist functions of our government. Establishing a new Homeland Security Department as soon as possible is a top priority.

Ensuring Economic Security

In the months after September 11, the resiliency and spirit of the American people helped our economy begin to recover. But the recent news of massive corporate scandals has slowed this recovery and shaken Americans' confidence in our economy. The president and the Congress must act swiftly to restore this faith.

The pattern of corporate irresponsibility demonstrated by Enron, WorldCom, and other companies is deeply disturbing. People in powerful positions committed unethical — if not illegal — acts that caused workers to lose their jobs, investors to lose their holdings, and retirees to lose their pensions and retirement savings. These executives must be held accountable, and future corporate scandals must be prevented.

I am supporting very tough accounting reform legislation. This bill would tighten accounting regulations and put an end to blatant conflicts of interest by preventing accountants from offering business advice to the companies they audit (like Arthur Andersen did with Enron). And, most importantly, it would hold top executives personally responsible for the accuracy of their companies' financial statements.

Central Coast companies pay their fair share of taxes. It is outrageous that a number of major American corporations — like Stanley Tools — have used a loophole in our tax code to avoid paying taxes by "moving their headquarters" to a post office box in Bermuda. I have cosponsored a bill to stop this unpatriotic practice.

The recent economic downturn hurts our ability to provide for our families, build our businesses, and save for retirement. Cracking down on corporate fraud and abuse is a critical step on the road back to financial success and stability.

Congresswoman Lois Capps, Coast Guard Commander Richard Brunke (center) and John Bogacki of the Bureau of Land Management meet at the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse to discuss preservation of the San Simeon landmark. Capps meets regularly with the Coast Guard and other agencies about urgent homeland security issues.



Working for Our Families

Capps Bill on Nursing Shortage to Become Law

Providing access to high quality, affordable and dependable health care has always been one of my top legislative concerns. With the added threat of terrorism, maintaining a strong public health infrastructure is more important than ever.

That's why I am so pleased my bill to address the nation's nursing shortage recently passed Congress and will soon be signed into law by the president. I drew on my twenty-eight years of nursing experience when drafting the Nurse Reinvestment Act. This bill improves access to nursing education, creates partnerships between health care providers and educational institutions, and supports working nurses seeking more training.

In California, there are 20,000 fewer nurses than we need and there aren't enough new nurses joining the workforce. We anticipate a shortfall of more than 1 million nurses over the next decade unless we act now. Passage of the Nurse Reinvestment Act is a good first step to addressing this crisis.

In addition, many doctors on the Central Coast are not taking on more patients because an obscure Medicare formula has cut their rate of reimbursement. I introduced the Medicare Physicians Protection Act to retract the rate cut and keep our doctors in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, and supported initiatives to increase funding for safety net hospitals. We must ensure that there are enough health care providers and facilities for all American families who need them.

Coverage for Prescription Drugs

More than one third of all prescriptions written by doctors go to senior citizens. With prescription drug prices climbing at more than twice the rate of inflation, seniors — many of whom are on fixed incomes — need support. And with many seniors choosing between paying for food and housing or paying for their medications, that support could not come soon enough.

As the co-chair of the Health and Medicare Task Force of the Democratic Caucus and a member of the Subcommittee on Health, I helped draft a bill to enact a prescription drug benefit as part of Medicare. This drug plan would be voluntary, affordable, and reliable. Unfortunately, the legislation passed by the House leadership falls far short. Instead of building on Medicare, this proposal relies on unwilling insurance companies to provide spotty coverage. Worst of all, coverage probably won't be available to all seniors.

The fact that Medicare HMOs have cut back on benefits, raised premiums, or abandoned the Central Coast altogether has made the issue of prescription drug coverage even more critical. I offered a number of amendments to ensure that Medicare HMOs provide coverage in rural areas and include basic benefits, like brand name drug coverage. But the majority party voted these proposals down.

It is still my hope that, working with the Senate, we can pass a meaningful Medicare prescription benefit this year. Our parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors deserve to live out their golden years in good health. And they don't deserve to see such a life and death issue fall victim to partisan politics.

Ending the Cycle of Abuse

Family violence, including child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and elder maltreatment, is an epidemic that affects up to 25 percent of the population. On the Central Coast, we are fortunate to have several outstanding groups that deal with family violence. But there is no national protocol for intervention or a process for addressing and solving this serious social problem.

I have introduced two bills to help end the vicious cycle of family violence and abuse. The Domestic Violence Screening and Treatment Act would provide women with screening, assessment, treatment and referral services, and includes provisions for health care professionals to receive the appropriate training to assess women for signs of abuse.

The Family Violence Prevention Act would establish a Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Family Violence, and create research and education centers for data collection and public information dissemination. It would also award grants to educate health professionals on how to assess and treat victims of abuse.

We cannot afford to hide domestic abuse and violence against women behind a wall of silence and secrecy. We owe it to our community and our country to address these critical health issues head on.



Congresswoman Lois Capps speaks about the law she passed to help victims of Lou Gehrig's disease. She recently introduced the National Cancer Act, a comprehensive bill to enhance and improve the government's role in the fight against cancer.

Working for the Central Coast

Capps Stops New Oil Drilling

The Central Coast is one of the most spectacular coastal environments in the world. Protecting our coastline from the ravages of oil spills is not only an environmental imperative, but is critically important to our economy. And for several years, I have been proud to lead the fight in Congress against new oil drilling off our shores.

The House of Representatives recently passed my amendment to the Interior Department funding bill to end new oil drilling off our coast. The amendment blocks any development of the 36 oil leases off the coasts of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties for the next year. This historic amendment passed with a large bipartisan vote of 252-172.

President Bush is to be commended for his decision to buy back undeveloped oil leases off the coast of Florida and in the Everglades. But what about California? Like countless Central Coast residents, I was outraged when Gale Norton, Secretary of the Interior, asserted "Florida opposes coastal drilling and California does not." Nothing could be further from the truth. I have requested a meeting with the president to discuss how we can terminate these leases for good.

I have also been strongly opposing a proposal by the U.S. Forest Service to open up additional areas in the Los Padres National Forest to oil and gas exploration. The potential environmental damage to this pristine, unspoiled forest is far too great a risk for an insignificant amount of oil. Los Padres is one of our nation's most spectacular natural resources. It must remain that way.

Confronting Energy Challenges

As California copes with another sweltering summer, the House leadership is pushing an energy bill that is bad for California and for our efforts to modernize our national energy policy.

Millions of California's families and businesses suffered greatly when Enron and other energy companies manipulated our electricity markets, causing enormous price increases and rolling blackouts. As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I will continue to push hard for provisions to stop price gouging, provide refunds to California consumers, and investigate the energy companies.

Given world events, a new national policy must do more to encourage conservation and energy efficiency. I have voted to increase fuel standards for cars and make our homes and businesses more energy efficient. I also strongly support increasing research into alternative energy sources like solar and wind technologies, and will continue to fight for energy legislation that is fair to consumers and friendly to the environment.

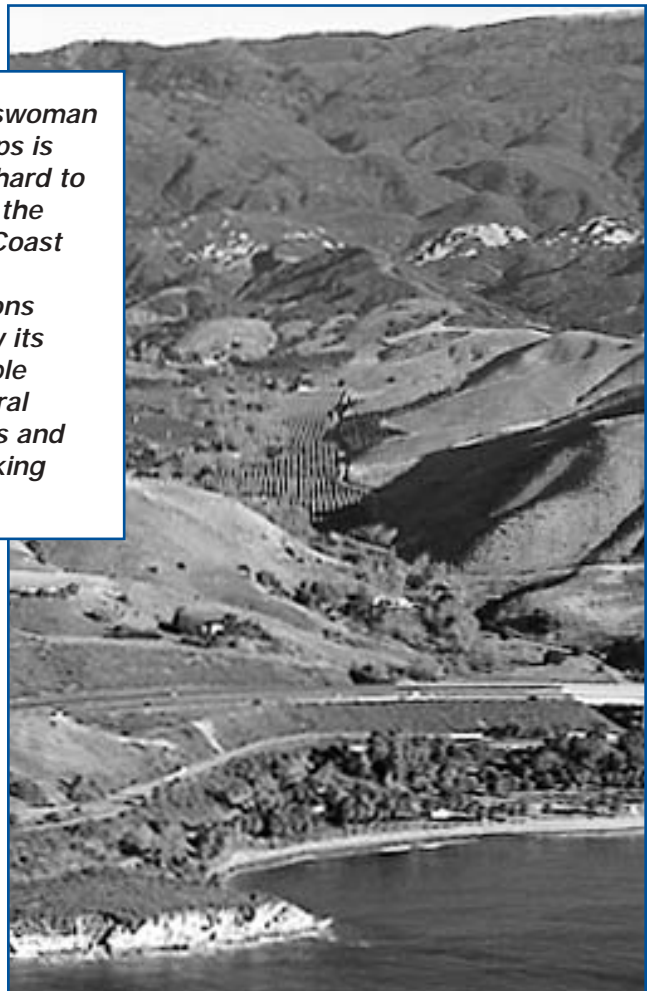
Helping Farmers and Fishers

When it comes to farming and ranching, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties are as bountiful as they are beautiful. Our incredibly diverse agriculture base is not only one of the top sectors of our economy, but also adds immeasurably to the special character of our region. I have worked with many leaders of our agricultural and environmental communities to find common ground as we try to maintain our spectacular open spaces. Similarly, Central Coast fishers and conservationists are coming together to sustain the resources of our ocean.

I have voted to repeal the estate tax to help keep family farms and businesses in the family and off the auction block, as well as for trade legislation that would open up foreign markets to our wine, lemons, broccoli, avocados, beef, and other farm exports. I've also helped secure funding to assist our vineyards fight against Pierce's disease and have supported efforts to crack down on infested produce imported from other countries.

The Central Coast has an active fishing community, which is why the current depletion of groundfish stock has hit us very hard. We must act now to let the fishery recover, without inflicting economic hardship on fishing families. That is why I have introduced the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Preservation Act. This bill would implement a buyback program allowing fishers to sell their boats and permits. Those who voluntarily leave the industry would do so with dignity and some portion of their life savings intact. Those who remain would benefit because fish quotas would be shared among fewer vessels.

Congresswoman Lois Capps is working hard to preserve the Gaviota Coast so future generations can enjoy its remarkable agricultural resources and breathtaking beauty.



Helping Real People Solve Real Problems

One of the most important responsibilities of a member of Congress is to help constituents who are tangled up in the red tape of government bureaucracy. Together with a dozen dedicated staff members in my Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo offices, I have worked on hundreds of these cases over the last four and a half years. We can't always achieve the desired outcome, but we always try our best.

Here are some examples of a few of our casework victories.

Costly Mistaken Identity

Sonia Hernandez lives in Santa Maria with her husband and two sons. They were preparing to move into a new home when they were told by Los Angeles Child Support Services that Sonia owed tens of thousands of dollars in child support. Because of this allegation, the IRS withheld over \$8,000 it owed her. But someone had stolen Sonia's Social Security number and assumed her identity. Fortunately, my staff was able to clear up the confusion, Sonia received her money, and LA Child Support won't bother her again.

A Necessary Operation

Paul Nolan of Santa Barbara is a paraplegic. After years in a wheel chair, he required surgery on a torn rotator cuff. This is normally an outpatient procedure, but Paul's situation required an overnight stay in the hospital. At first, Medicare refused to pay for an overnight stay, and Paul's family worried that he couldn't have this critical operation. Working with Paul's doctors, we persuaded Medicare to approve the overnight stay and he was able to obtain the medical care he needed.

Bravery Not Forgotten

Joan Cox of Templeton was only 12 when her father, Milford Tognazzini was killed in a vehicle explosion in Vietnam. Mr. Tognazzini was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, but Joan often wondered about her dad's six wounded Navy colleagues. After locating three of the six, Joan found out that none had

received the Purple Heart. My staff helped obtain the medals for these three brave men, and at an emotional ceremony, I gave them to Joan. On Memorial Day last year, Joan traveled to Arlington National Cemetery and presented them to Milford Tognazzini's three courageous comrades in arms.



Lois Capps presents a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition to Millie Mauer for volunteering to teach the arts to Central Coast students. Capps and her staff have met with thousands of Central Coast residents and have resolved hundreds of problems with federal agencies.

Recovering Social Security

Loraine Placido of Morro Bay suffered a stroke and was entitled to a private disability pension from her former employer as well as Social Security Disability. But Social Security incorrectly believed she

also received other disability income and reduced her Social Security payments substantially for many years. That mistake also led to her being overtaxed by the IRS. We prevailed on Social Security to correct their mistake and Ms. Placido received a substantial, well-deserved reimbursement from Social Security. And the IRS forgave her "owed taxes."

Young Couple Reunited

Pat and Minako O'Malley from Goleta are a young married couple. When Minako traveled to Japan to visit her family over the holidays, she was prevented from returning home because she was told that her green card had expired. Minako had done nothing wrong, and this technical problem could have been easily fixed had she been in the States. We worked hard to cut through the red tape at the INS and our embassies, and were able to bring Minako home to her husband.

Justice for a Wounded Vet

Fred Romero of Santa Maria is a Korean War era veteran who served our nation in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. He was injured during training, but for years the VA disputed that his ailments – including hearing loss and spinal injury – were service connected. My husband, Congressman Walter Capps, began working on his case in 1997, and I picked up where he left off. A few weeks ago, Mr. Romero received his first substantial payment from the VA. It was gratifying to help someone who sacrificed so much for our country.

How to Contact Congresswoman Capps

1118 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0522
(202) 225-3601

1411 Marsh Street, Suite 205
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 546-8348

1216 State Street
Suite 403
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 730-1710

910 E. Stowell Road, Suite 111
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 349-9313

E-mail web address:
www.house.gov/writerep

Web site: www.house.gov/capps

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lois Capps".

M.C.
PRSRT STD

LOIS CAPPS REPORTS TO YOU